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SAGINA NIVALIS **ARCTIC PEARLWORT**

Arctic Pearlwort is a small, cushion-forming perennial with numerous ascending to prostrate stems that are 1-5 cm long and arising from a basal rosette. The linear basal leaves are 5-15 mm long and have pointed tips. Pairs of opposite stem leaves are smaller and united around the stem at their bases. Foliage is glabrous and usually purplish tinged. Small, long-stalked, cup-shaped flowers arise from the axils of the uppermost 1-3 leaf pairs. The 4 purplish, separate sepals are 1-2 mm long, and the 4 white petals are usually slightly shorter. The fruit capsules are 2-3 mm long and expand beyond the appressed sepals. Flowering in late July-early August.

The more common *SAGINA SAGINOIDES* has 5 sepals that are white- or green- rather than purple-margined. *S. PROCUMBENS* does not form small mats. *STELLARIA* and *CERASTIUM* have deeply bilobed petals. *SPERGULARIA* has clusters of secondary leaves in the leaf axils. A hand lens is needed for positive identification.